

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-16 are pending in the present application. Claim 1 is independent. Claim 5 has been canceled, which subject matter has been incorporated into claim 1.

Drawing Objection

The drawings have been objected to, and in particular Figure 21 has been objected to as not corresponding to the associated description on page 41 of the Specification. Instead of a drawing correction, Applicants provide herewith an amendment to page 41 of the Specification to correspond to the drawing in Figure 21. In particular, steps a129 and a128 are correctly shown in Figure 21. The steps were inadvertently reversed in the corresponding portion of the Specification.

Based on the amendment to the Specification, Applicants submit that no drawing correction is necessary and respectfully request that the drawing objection be withdrawn.

Objection to the Specification

The Title has been objected to as being non-descriptive. Applicants have included herewith the new title suggested in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 has been objected to for minor informalities. By this Amendment, claim 13 has been amended as recommended in the Office Action. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. 112

Claim 16 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as directed to a non-enabling disclosure. Applicants have amended claim 16 to correspond to the associated discussion in the Specification on page 41. In particular, the Specification on page 41 describes an approval request process wherein an approval seal is affixed to an approval request, and the approval request is forwarded to the next approver (step a129). Alternatively, an approval request with the approval request seal affixed is stored and an order form issuing process is performed (step a128). Thus, claim 16 has been amended to recite “approval request processing means” and “approval request processing,” in order to cover the disclosed approval request processing steps. Applicants submit that the claim as amended has support in the Specification and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-4 and 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fitzpatrick et al. (U.S. Patent 5,420,936, hereinafter Fitzpatrick). By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 5. Thus, Applicants submit that the rejection no longer applies.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. 103: Fitzpatrick and Mori

Claims 5, 15, and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fitzpatrick and Mori et al. (U.S. Patent 5,040,142, hereinafter Mori). By this Amendment, the subject matter of claim 5 has been incorporated into claim 1.

The Office Action admits that Fitzpatrick fails to teach the claimed secret number acquiring means and secret number identifying means of original claim 5. The claim as amended is directed to, among other things, a fingerprint verification means, coordinate designating means for designating coordinates related to fingerprint reading on a display surface, secret number acquiring means for acquiring a secret number based on the designated coordinates, secret number identifying means for verifying the acquired secret number, and control means for controlling an operation based on designated coordinates and based on a result of the secret number verification. Applicants submit that Fitzpatrick and Mori, either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all claimed elements.

Mori

Mori is directed to a method of editing and circulating an electronic draft document among reviewing persons. The method is such that an addressed electronic document is circulated among a plurality of workstations through a transfer path and attest patterns indicative of approvals of reviewing persons are added along the transfer path. A display (e.g., Figure 4) for the workstation displays the contents of an electronic document which has been received from another workstation and includes a window 143 provided for inputting a password

assigned to each user so as to read out registered seal image data (Mori: column 5, lines 8-10). Upon displaying the window 143, the user inputs a password and if the password is coincident with a registered seal image, the registered seal image data is read into a work area 12D. Then, when the user employs the mouse to designate a position to be sealed on the document displayed on the document display window, the seal image data are created so as to incorporate the seal image data into the portion of the document corresponding to the designated position (Mori: paragraph bridging columns 8 and 9).

Differences over Fitzpatrick and Mori

The Office Action alleges that Mori's password input window 143 constitutes the claimed secret number acquiring means and that Mori discloses a control means which controls an operation based on a result of the secret number verification. The claim, however, is directed to a control means for controlling an operation based on a combination of designated coordinates related to fingerprint reading as well as a result of the secret number verification, and the acquired secret number is based on designated coordinates (e.g., see Figure 7, and associated description in the Specification at paragraph bridging pages 26 and 27).

Mori does not disclose such a combination, as it does not disclose authentication using fingerprint reading. Mori does disclose authentication by inputting a password into a window of a display, but that password is not acquired, for example, based on coordinates of the window. Therefore, Mori does not at least teach or suggest a secret number acquired based on designated

coordinates, and much less controlling an operation based on designated coordinates related to a fingerprint reading and based on a result of verification of the acquired secret number. Thus, Applicants submit that Fitzpatrick and Mori, either alone or in combination, fail to teach at least these claimed elements. Accordingly, the rejection fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness for claim 1.

With respect to claims 15 and 16, for the same reasons as above for claim 1, Applicants submit that Fitzpatrick and Mori fail to teach all claimed elements for dependent claims 15 and 16, as well. Further with respect to claims 15 and 16, Applicants submit that coordinates in Mori are designated based on a mouse pointing device (Mori: column 4, lines 45-47), and not related to fingerprint reading as in the claimed invention. Thus, at least for this additional reason, Applicants submit that all claimed elements of claims 15 and 16 are not taught or suggested by Fitzpatrick and Mori. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. 103: Fitzpatrick, Mori, and Matsumura

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Fitzpatrick and Mori, and further in view of Matsumura (U.S. Patent 5,493,621). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Matsumura

Matsumura is directed to a fingerprint ID system. In the course of registering a fingerprint, a password can be input as an index of the registered fingerprint data. In the matching process, the password is input and then the finger is examined by placing it on the image input device (Matsumura: column 11, lines 44-50).

Differences over Matsumura

The Office Action alleges that Matsumura discloses a fingerprint identification system wherein the control means activates the fingerprint verification means when the secret numbers match each other (Matsumura: column 11, lines 44-54). Applicants disagree. Matsumura's password is not based on a designated coordinate and the designated coordinate is not related to fingerprint reading. Thus, Matsumura does not teach wherein the control means activates the fingerprint verification means upon matching of a secret number acquired based on designated coordinates, in the context claimed. Therefore, Applicants submit that Fitzpatrick, Mori and Matsumura, either alone or in combination, fail to teach all claimed elements of claim 6. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn. °

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. 103: Fitzpatrick and Angelo

Claim 7 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fitzpatrick and Angelo (U.S. Patent 5,887,131). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

At least for the same reason as above for claim 1, Fitzpatrick and Angelo fail to teach all claimed elements of claim 7. In particular, Applicants submit that Angelo fails to make up for the deficiency of Fitzpatrick of failing to teach a secret number acquiring means, secret number identifying means, and control means. Further, with respect to claim 7, Angelo is relied on for teaching the claimed operation of a power source when there is a match in fingerprint. Angelo does appear to teach access control to a computer system, as well as scanning of a fingerprint. However, Applicants note that Angelo teaches a plain text access control algorithm based on a password. As an alternative, a scanned fingerprint could be converted into a plain text password value (Angelo: column 7, lines 28-32). Thus, Applicants submit that Angelo does not teach operation of a power source "when there is a match in fingerprint" as in the claimed invention. Accordingly, for at least this additional reason, Applicants submit that the rejection fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness for claim 7. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. 103: Fitzpatrick and Shieh

Claims 8-10 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fitzpatrick and Shieh (U.S. Patent 5,874,948). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

At least for the same reason as above for claim 1, Fitzpatrick and Shieh fail to teach all claimed elements of claims 8-10 and 14, as well. In particular, Applicants submit that Shieh fails to make up for the deficiency of Fitzpatrick of failing to teach a secret number acquiring means, secret number identifying

means, and control means. Rather, Shieh is relied on for teaching elements specifically recited in claims 8-10 and 14. With respect to claim 14, Shieh is relied on for teaching menu execution level area setting means and menu execution level area designation judging means. Specifically, the Office Action directs Applicants attention to initiating display of a pull down menu, e.g., default menu, by touching a screen.

Claim 14, however, is directed to an execution level associated with a user and an area of a menu having a designated execution level. When a menu area is designated and there is a match in fingerprint, the control means executes a menu at an execution level associated with the user, as well as at an execution level designated for the menu area. Shieh does appear to create a virtual pointing device based on a user file of predefined customized features (Shieh: column 4, lines 28-33). However, there is no disclosure of execution level associated with a user and execution level of a menu area in Shieh. Thus, Applicants submit that for at least for this additional reason, Fitzpatrick and Shieh fail to teach all claimed elements of claim 14. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the various rejections and allowance of claims 1-16 is respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert W. Downs (Reg. No. 48,222) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to

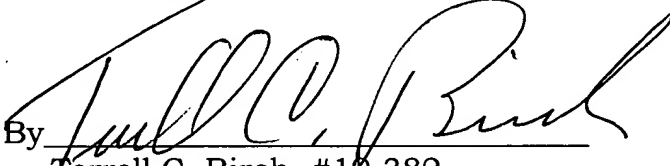
conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

(Rev. 02/20/02)

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

The paragraph beginning on page 41, line 4, has been amended as follows:

At step a127, it is judged whether or not the total amount of the approval request is within the authority of the approver. The operation goes to step a129 when the amount is within the authority, whereas the operation goes to step a128 when not within the authority. At step [a128] a129, the user having inputted a fingerprint affixes his/her approval seal to the approval request and passes the approval request with the approval seal affixed on the next approver. That is to say, data transmission to the next approver is performed via network. Then, the operation is ended. At step [a129] a128, the user having inputted a fingerprint affixes his/her approval seal to the approval request, stores the approval request with the approval seal affixed into a storage place set in the approval request file and performs an order form issuing process, whereby the operation is ended.

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 5 has been canceled.

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:
fingerprint verification means for verifying a fingerprint read from a
fingerprint reading surface against previously stored fingerprints of authorized
users,

the information processing apparatus further comprising:

display means having a display surface with orthogonal coordinates set
thereon;

coordinate designating means for designating coordinates related to
fingerprint reading on the display surface; [and

control means for controlling an operation based on designated
coordinates]

secret number acquiring means for acquiring a secret number based on
said designated coordinates;

secret number identifying means for verifying the acquired secret

number against a previously stored secret number; and

control means for controlling an operation based on designated

coordinates and a result of the secret number verification.

6. (Amended) The information processing apparatus of claim 1 [5],
wherein the control means activates the fingerprint verification means when
the secret numbers match each other.

13. (Amended) The information processing apparatus of claim 11, wherein the respective icons are associated with files for the respective authorized users; and

when an icon is designated and there is a match in fingerprint as a result of the fingerprint verification, the control means opens only a file of a user having the matching fingerprint out of files associated with the designated icon [out of the files].

16. (Amended) The information processing apparatus of claim 1, wherein a document having a seal box is displayed on the display means; and

when detected coordinates are coordinates of the seal box, the control means affixes an approval seal in the seal box of the document,

the information processing apparatus further comprising:

approval request [attendant] processing means for subjecting an approval-seal affixed document to an approval request [attendant] processing.